

**City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MAY 1, 2013
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of May 1, 2013 was called to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair (CC) Wright, Vice Chair Wong, Commissioner (C) Block, Bortoli, Sullivan and Michaels

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: YC Fox and C Runyan

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, Recreation Manager (RM) Brunson, Recreation Coordinator (RC) Mason and Secretary Saggau

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

C Bortoli moved, seconded by C Wong, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of April 3, 2013. Vote 6-0 in favor.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRD Gervais announced the following:

- A Bike Rodeo will be held at the Barrett Community Center on Saturday, May 4 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It is part of the Streets Alive Weekend.
- Staff to be present on Sunday, May 5 at the Farmer's Market to promote summer programs.
- Bike to Work Day is scheduled for May 9 and a recharging booth at the Caltrains Station will be manned by city staff.
- A Hungarian Festival will be held at Twin Pines Park on Saturday, May 11th.
- The next Tree Board meeting will be held in June.

PRD Gervais expressed thanks to Commissioner Michaels for his assistance at the Volunteer Day at Barrett and to C Wong for taking photographs of the Rebuilding Together Day.

C Sullivan reported the Barrett Ad-Hoc Committee met and started the process to establish the scope of the Committee. Meeting notes will be sent to the Commission. PRD Gervais said the regular meeting was set as the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM at Barrett.

CC Wright noted that there was still a vacancy for the Tree Board assignment. PRD Gervais said if any of the Commissioners would like to volunteer for this assignment to let staff know.

C Block noticed Paper Trails was no longer a Committee Assignment and asked about it. PRD Gervais said he could bring this back as an agenda item to give the Commission an update on it.

C Block volunteered to take on the vacant park assignment for College View Park.

PRD Gervais reminded Commissioners if they have not completed their Form 700 this needs to be done.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Consideration and Adoption of the Updated Facility Use Policy

PRD Gervais noted this policy exists to govern how the community uses public facilities, to establish the rules and the fees to be charged. Facilities covered under this policy include the Senior/Community Center, Lodge, Cottage, Manor House and picnic areas in Twin Pines Park. It also covers the Sports Complex Conference Center, Barrett Community Center and Alexander Park picnic area.

PRD Gervais explained the reasons why the policy needs an update and the changes to be made:

- Remove the constantly changing fee table and refer to City's Master Fee Schedule
- Remove the political activities section
- Simplify the group categories, refunds and priority
- Addition of new facilities – Manor House and Alexander Park Picnic area.

Additional changes to the policy include cleaning up the available hours and improving the waste collection and recycling in the facilities.

PRD Gervais, RM Brunson and RC Mason responded to Commission questions:

- Revenue is expected to increase with the addition of Manor House rentals and additional rentals at Barrett Community Center. There will also be expenditures made to improve these facilities.
- Staff plans to look at ways to increase Friday night rentals.
- Political groups can still rent the facility but will no longer get a free reservation.
- Facility rates in Belmont are on the high end compared to neighboring cities. Belmont facilities are unique and difficult to compare to other city's facilities.
- The Picnic Area reservations have been well received and have generated additional revenue.

- There are some ongoing rental groups and many one-time private rentals.
- Occupancy limits were not addressed in the Facility Use Policy. A statement on complying with capacity limits will be added to the General Regulations.
- Event security requirements that include the parking area are referring to event patrons.
- Deposits are kept if parties cancel their event less than 120 days prior to the event but staff has some flexibility with this policy.
- Staff will consider changing the timeframe when non-residents can reserve facilities to provide a longer priority time for residents.
- Staff has done some review on the percentage of the available time reserved in facilities and will expand this research to determine where marketing is needed.
- Deductions from security deposits are usually made for overtime hours. There are few incidents where deductions are made for damages.
- There are no scholarship fees for reserving the picnic areas; however there are picnic areas that are available first-come, first-serve.
- Upgrading technology at the Sports Complex Conference Center could be considered to increase rentals. The Conference Center does not have a kitchen making it less expensive to rent.
- A higher security deposit for the Manor Building can be built into the Master Fee Schedule.
- Maps have been created and posted on site to clearly identify the area included in the reserveable picnic areas at Alexander Park and the Buckeye in Twin Pines Park. Staff will also post a map for the Redwood Picnic area.
- The City does not maintain a preferred vendor list.
- The facility rates are listed in the City's Master Fee Schedule which is updated yearly. The fees are also included in marketing materials.

C Block encouraged staff to create metrics for all of the facilities to track their use. He also recommended that the Department take advantage of the city's soon to be updated website so that people can easily navigate to Parks & Recreation offerings.

C Bortoli said he likes the direction the Department has been going with rentals and would also like to see metrics of facility use. He cautioned staff that a goal of being revenue neutral in this program in three years is good but it may not be practical.

C Wong said he agreed with C Block statements and that he likes the wording and direction of the policy.

C Michaels was also in agreement with the other Commissioners.

C Sullivan was in agreement that usage metrics would be valuable. He suggested that lowering the price during low rental times could be considered to increase rentals. He noted that usage metrics for the ball fields would also be useful to determine what the community needs.

C Wright also questioned if lower rates should be considered for lower usage times. RC Mason explained some cities have excluded non-profit rental rates on Saturday nights and steer them towards Friday or Sunday nights but that may not be preferred in this community.

CC Wright suggested that language be added to the policy recommending that recyclable or compostable materials be used at events. She noted more photos of the facilities on the website would help people visualize the facilities and also suggested focusing on one facility in each issue of the Activity Guide.

PRD Gervais summarized the changes to the Facility Use Policy recommended by the Commission included adding some language on the facility capacity limits and adding an encouragement to recycle and compost appropriately. Additional recommendations outside of the policy included providing maps of the picnic areas, increasing marketing, collecting data on usage, improving technology at the Conference Center and raising the security deposit at the Manor House.

C Sullivan moved, seconded by C Wong, that with the added changes that the Director of Parks & Recreation Department has suggested to the Commission that the Commission adopt the new policy. Vote 6-0 in favor.

The Commission took a brief recess from 8:35-8:38.

C Sullivan requested that the Department prepare usage statistics on the facilities and bring this back to the Commission.

b. Updated on the Parks and Recreation Department Budget in Preparation for Fiscal Year 2013-2014

PRD Gervais gave a report on the budget and explained the process and the details on the Parks and Recreation Department Budget. He noted the mission of the department is to Enhance the Quality of the Life for the community. PRD Gervais stated that the department has grown internally and has many partner organizations that assist in achieving the goal of meeting our customers' needs. PRD Gervais reviewed the staffing for the Parks and Recreation divisions and displayed an organizational chart showing the positions.

PRD Gervais explained the Parks Division maintains 14 parks, 11 athletic fields, 335 acres of open space, 22 public buildings, medians and rights-of way maintenance and management of trees. The main funding source for this division is the General Fund which comes from property tax dollars.

PRD Gervais noted the Recreation Division includes services for seniors, adult recreation classes, teen services in partnership with library, a preschool program, recreation programs for kids, youth sport fields' allocation and management and facility rentals for the community. He noted the cost recovery rate is at 75%.

PRD Gervais explained that there are some special funding sources. Funds in these accounts remain available unlike the operating budget which goes back into the general fund if not spent. The special funding sources include Planned Park, Tree Fund, Field Maintenance, Facilities, Litter Control and Library Accounts. Projects planned for these funds include improvements to the Barrett Community Center and other recreation facilities including the Manor House. In

future years there are plans to replace the restroom at Alexander Park and install a generator at the Twin Pines Senior/Community Center.

The Tree Fund will be used to hire an on call Arborist to assist with Tree permits. The Field Maintenance Fund will cover the cost of the synthetic turf project plan preparation for the Sports Complex.

PRD Gervais reviewed the progress on the goals of 2012 and the goals set for 2013.

PRD Gervais and RS Brunson responded to Commission questions.

- Requests for staff expansion include a permanent ¾ time Recreation Specialist for Barrett and the teen program, an additional facilities maintenance person, and an increase in staff hours for the Recreation Coordinator at the Senior Center.
- Use of the Athletic Maintenance Funds for the planning and design of the synthetic turf project has been presented to the Sports Advisory Committee
- Increases in revenue sources would be dependent on improvements to Barrett Community Center and providing staff at the site. Additional partnerships would also expose city programs to a larger segment of the community.
- Additional revenue could come from recreation programs and facility rentals.
- There is not always funding available for prioritized projects but there are opportunities that come up for funding so it is best to be ready with a design.
- Tree funds mainly come from developments that remove a large amount of trees. They also come from penalties and individual tree removal permits. These funds may be used for larger park development but that would need to be reviewed by the Tree Board.
- The library maintenance fund covers the long term maintenance of the library. It can be used for projects at the library site.

C Michaels expressed thanks to staff for the great work accomplished with limited resources.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais reported the following:

- Over 115 volunteers from Rebuilding Together worked on improvements at Barrett Community Center and he expressed thanks to Electronic Arts and Rebuilding Together.
- Refinishing of the hard wood floors at the Manor House will be on the City Council agenda in May.
- The City Council approved going out to bids for the Senior Center improvement project.
- In response to a citizen's complaint about dog waste at Semeria Park a notice was posted at all the parks noting the requirement that owners clean up after their dogs.
- A Battle of the Bands for youth is scheduled for May 29 at the Sports Complex.

In response to CC Wright's question, PRD Gervais said the storm water grant request has been submitted for Davey Glen Park but staff has not heard back yet.

Responding to C Bortoli's question, PRD Gervais said a meeting will be set up with the residents requesting a community garden at O'Donnell Park.

C Bortoli expressed concern with no pedestrian access being available at Ralston School during construction this summer. He was also concerned that the sidewalk in front of the school may not be available as well. He questioned if neighboring residents would be notified and spoke to the School Board. In addition there have been some problems with the porta-potty companies not being able to provide service as they are locked out. PRD Gervais noted the Public Works Department has been made aware of the sidewalk concern and this is being discussed. Staff will look into concern with service to the porta potty.

C Bortoli noted the Commission is still short a Youth Commissioner and questioned if the Commission should approach the City Council to see if the seat can be filled. PRD Gervais suggested calling or emailing the City Council if they would like to request recruitment for another Youth Commissioner. Several Commissioners expressed support for filling the vacancy and CC Wright stated she would contact the City Council.

In response to C Wong's inquiry, PRD Gervais said he was not aware of any ongoing conversations between the neighborhood and Charles Armstrong School. The school did follow up and look into a track around the field but the estimate came back high and they wanted to meet and talk about it. This meeting has not been set up yet. In addition city staff will post more information on the scheduled activities at the park.

In response to C Wong's question staff does not have metrics on use at the Cipriani Dog Park. Information on Cipriani Dog Park has not been posted at the other parks but flyers could be posted to remind park visitors that Cipriani Dog Park is available.

B. Future Agenda Items

Belmont Sports Complex Turf Project
Summer Schedule for Commission meetings
Tree Board Meeting in June
Meeting Rules
Update on Davey Glen Park
Paper Trails

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director